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AUTHOR Lutterbie, Patricia Hansen
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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to learn whether black educators who had been principals of all-black schools experienced job displacement during the period when schools were being desegregated. Reactive and nonreactive data-collecting techniques were used to gather information on 343 black administrators. The findings indicate that during the desegregation process, black educators experienced job displacement in the form of dismissal, demotion, or transfer not initiated by the black educator. Study data also show that the number of principalships held by black educators has remained disproportionately low, and that there have been only a few black administrators occupying regularly funded, hardline district level positions. (Author)

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BLACK ADMINISTRATORS: WINNERS AND LOSERS IN THE DESEGREGATION-INTEGRATION PROCESS

Patricia H. Lutterbie
Assistant Professor of Educational Administration
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

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Patricia H. Lutterbie
Assistant Professor of Educational Administration
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

As the process of desegregation began in the southern states, (Egerton, 1967) called attention to the fact that black educators appeared to be losers in the desegregation process. Evidence which he had accumulated indicated that black educators, (particularly black principals) were being displaced, demoted or dismissed from their positions. In an attempt to document this phenomena state surveys were made by Allen (1968) in North Carolina, Reed (1971) in Georgia, and Banks (1971) in Virginia. Hooker (1970) gathered similar data in 11 of the southern states. These surveys, together with the information gathered by the Mondale Committee (1971) verified that there was indeed displacement of black educators as schools desegregated. However, the data tended to be somewhat fragmentary in

terms of the actual occupational patterns of the educators involved subsequent to their displacement.

The purpose of this study then was to gather data to determine how the occupational patterns of black principals had been affected by desegregation.

METHOD

In order to provide the necessary longitudinal data, the study population consisted of all those black educators who had been principals of black schools before desegregation began in Florida. Initial definition of that population was made by listing the 409 black educators who appeared in the 1960 Florida Educational Directory as having been principals of elementary or secondary Negro schools having any combination of grades K-12. This was relatively simple since Florida Educational Directories list "Negro" and "White" schools separately for each county until 1965.

In order to avoid the weakness of using a single approach, (Webb et al, 1970) both reactive and nonreactive data gathering techniques were used to collect the necessary information.

Data Collection Techniques

The reactive data was gathered through an instrument which was constructed, field-tested and subsequently administered to 343 black educators who had been principals of all black schools before the schools were desegregated. The instrument was designed to collect pertinent occupational data for the 12 year period, 1960-1972. Although the original population had consisted of 409 black educators, 20 were used in field testing the instrument, 35 were deceased and there were no available addresses for 11 educators even after repeated attempts.

Several nonreactive, unobtrusive sources of data were used to verify and supplement the information collected by the reactive approach of the questionnaire. The nonreactive data also provided an external validity check on the questionnaire. These sources included:

1) Florida Educational Directories from 1960-1972 which, together with additional information gathered from the files of the Florida State Department of Education, provided data on, among other things, how many times a given principal had moved from one position to another or from one school to another.

2) The Department of Health, Education & Welfare (HEW) provided computer print-outs of Florida District Reports showing the number of principals in Florida by race for the years 1969-1970.

3) HEW forms OS/CR 101 and OS/CR 102 provided system-wide and individual school data on principals by race in each reporting district for 1971.

4) Polk's City Directories provided data which permitted verification of addresses and gave occupational titles on a year by year basis for respondents and nonrespondents.

5) Fifty-five county personnel officers responded favorably to requests for information concerning personnel. Florida has 67 counties.

Subject Classification

The population of 343 educators who were principals of black schools in Florida in 1960-1961 was partitioned into 2 major subsets of those 213 educators who were elementary school principals in 1960 and those 130 educators who were secondary principals in 1960. The data were further cross-partitioned into male/female

subsets. Cross-partitioning of these subsets was then done to create 7 categories of occupational positions. These subsets included: 1. elementary principals, 2. secondary principals,[1] 3. assistant principals or teachers,[2] 4. county-level staff, 5. unemployed, 6. retired, and 7. employed outside the school system. Cross-breaks were made for each academic year from 1960-1961 to 1971-1972.

RESULTS

There were 246 respondents to the questionnaire and 99 nonrespondents. The following findings, however, were based upon the reactive and nonreactive data on nonrespondents.

Occupations Held During 1971-1972

Fifty-one (15%) of the 343 educators were holding county level positions in the public school system during the 1971-1972 academic year; however, only 10 (.03%) were holding positions which may have had to meet specific Florida State Department of Education requirements for certification.[3]

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[1] A master's degree is required in Florida for certification as a principal of elementary or secondary school.

[2] Only a bachelor's degree is required to serve as a teacher or assistant principal in Florida.

[3] Florida requires certification only for positions which are instructional in nature.

One hundred (29%) of the educators had suffered demotion by being placed in teaching positions or lower level principalships which required less education, experience or different certification than did their previous principalships. Fifteen (.04%) of these were educators who had been principals of secondary schools in 1960-1961 and who were supervising elementary schools in 1971-1972. Thirty (.09%) had been secondary principals and were working as assistant principals and/or teachers. Fifty-five (16%) were educators who had been elementary principals and who were holding assistant principalships or who were teaching.

Ten (.03%) secondary principals and seven (.02%) elementary principals had left the public school system.

Eight-six (25%) of the 343 educators had retired from the public school system by the beginning of the 1971-1972 academic year. The average age of retirement for the 86 respondents was between 56-60 years of age, which was lower than the average reported retirement age for educators in Florida.

Seven (.02%) educators were unemployed.

Sixty-three (18%) elementary principals had remained in that position for the entire twelve year period.

Only eight (.02%) educators who had been secondary principals in 1960 had been able to keep secondary principalships until 1972.

Only 2 (.006%) educators had been moved from elementary to secondary principalships.

There were no occupational data available for 9 (.03%) educators for the years 1971-1972.

Occupational Patterns: Elementary and Secondary

Differences in Occupational Patterns

There were differences in the occupational patterns of elementary school principals when compared with secondary school principals. Elementary educators were more likely to retain their positions as principals than were secondary school principals with 65 (31%) of the 213 elementary educators remaining in either an elementary or secondary principalship. Only 23 (18%) of the 130 educators remained in principalships during the entire 12 year period.

Multiple Positions Shifts

Approximately 1/3 of the secondary school educators who were in county level positions in 1972 had experienced multiple position shifts after leaving the principalships.

A multiple position shift is the sequential movement of a person from job to job. Nearly 1/2 of all the elementary school educators who were in county level positions in 1972 had experienced multiple position shifts.

Similarities in Occupational Patterns

There were two similarities in occupational patterns. Educators, both secondary and elementary, were unlikely to make another occupational shift if they moved out of full principalships directly into a teaching position or an assistant principalship.

Half of the educators who retired did so directly from a principalship. The other half of those educators who had retired experienced at least one occupational position shift out of the principalship and into another job before electing to retire.

Occupational Pattern Comparison: Five Year Periods

Differences in Occupational Patterns

When occupational patterns between 1960-1965 were compared with occupational patterns established between 1966-1972, four differences were noted.

First, the rate of decrease of educators out of secondary school principalships nearly tripled from

1966-1972 when compared to 1960-1965; and the rate of decrease of educators out of elementary school principalships nearly doubled in 1966-1972 when compared with 1960-1965.

Second, fewer educators went into teaching positions or assistant principalships during the 1966-1972 period than during the 1960-1965 period.

Third, although there was an increase in the number of educators taking county level positions during the entire period, three times as many respondents moved into these positions between 1966-1972 than had made such a move during the 1960-1965 period.

Fourth, although there were retirements during the entire 12 year period, there were three times as many educators retiring in the period 1966-1972 than in the 1960-1965 period.

Occupational Position Comparison: Men and Women Who Had Been Elementary Principals

Differences in Occupational Positions

There were obvious differences when one compared the occupational patterns of women who responded to the questionnaire and who had been principals of elementary schools with the patterns of men respondents who had been

principals of elementary schools. Only seventeen (23%) of the women still held principalships in 1971-1972 while thirty-four (47%) of the men were still elementary principals during that year. In addition, while no women held a secondary principalship in 1971-1972, two men were in such positions. This made a total of 36 (50%) of these men still holding principalships.

Many more women than men were in teaching positions or held assistant principalships. Twenty-three (31%) of the women were in such positions compared with only 6 (8%) of the men. Twenty-nine (30%) women had retired compared with only 14 (20%) men.

More men than women held county level staff positions. Only 3 (4%) women held county level positions while 15 (21%) men were so employed. Two women and no men were unemployed in 1971-1972.

Similarities in Occupational Patterns

Two similarities were noted in the occupational patterns of men and women. Both groups began to retire during the same year 1964-1965.

Both men and women began to move into county level positions during the same year, 1965-1966.

Occupational Patterns Comparison: Educators from Counties Having Pupil Increase or Decrease

Differences in Occupational Patterns

When data were compared for educators from the ten counties in Florida which had experienced the greatest pupil increase between 1960-1972 and those counties which had experienced the least pupil increase, the following differences in occupational patterns were found. In the counties having the least pupil increase, 96 percent of the educators had moved out of principalships by 1971-1972, compared with only 59 percent of the educators from counties having the greatest pupil increase.

While only 8 percent of the educators from the counties having the greatest pupil increase had experienced demotion into teaching positions or assistant principalships, 36 percent of the educators in the counties having the least pupil population had made such a move.

In counties having the least pupil increase, only men occupied county level positions.

Educators in the counties having the least pupil increase, began to move out of the public school system as early as 1961-1962. Educators from the counties having

the greatest pupil increase did not make such position shifts until 1966-1967.

Similarities in Occupational Patterns

The two similarities which were noted for the two groups were that there was a consistent loss in principalships both at the elementary and secondary levels during the entire period, and retirements were approximately the same for both groups in terms of the years when retirements occurred and the percentage of educators retiring.

DISCUSSION

Data collected for this study substantiated and supported the contention that black educators do suffer drastic occupational changes during the period of school desegregation. Although more recent data collected during the 1973-1974 academic year would indicate that a few black educators are now being moved into assistant superintendencies it is still true that, for the most part, experienced black educators are remaining in positions in the public school system which require less experience, less education, and demand less responsibility than does a full principalship.

Very little desegregation occurred in Florida until 1965, and those few educators who were moved from principalships before that time tended to be placed in teaching positions or assistant principalships. When, in 1965-1966 Federal funds became available in greater amounts, the tendency was still to move elementary principals into teaching positions while secondary principals tended to move into county level positions.

These county level positions, however, were in federally funded or soft money positions rather than being standard hard line positions. Further, these positions did not always carry the role responsibility of decision making compatible with the title given the position. In short, they were positions with newly conceived titles, ill defined job description and little job function. For example, 33 of the 51 educators who held county level positions in 1971-1972 had job titles which did not even exist in Florida prior to 1965. Such job titles were: Director of Student Relations, Director of Human Relations, Administrative Assistant for Special Projects, etc.

One reason for many educators being moved from one county level position to another seemed to be accounted

for by actual job function. For example, an educator who had been assigned the title, "Middle School Coordinator," at a time when no middle schools existed in the County, was moved into the position of "Human Relations Specialist," as soon as the planning for a middle school was initiated in the County.

Florida has had rather strong tenure laws providing for continued employment for educators after their first three years of successful service in the public school system. Although an attempt was made by the State Legislature during the early 1960's to change the existing tenure laws, the move was not successful. These laws, undoubtedly, were instrumental in causing black principals to be demoted rather than being dismissed during the period of school desegregation as was the case in states having less stringent statutes.

The real losers in the desegregation process are those black men who were principals of secondary schools. In 1960-1961 there were 130 men who were principals of black secondary schools in Florida. By 1972, when the desegregation process was being completed, only 13 black men were principals of secondary schools. Three of these were "new hires" after 1960.

Black women also lost out during the desegregation process as they were moved from principalships into teaching positions rather than into county level positions.

Other losers were the black educators, both men and women, who were principals of schools in those Florida counties which experienced little pupil increase during the years 1960-1972 as they were moved into teaching positions rather than into meaningful county level positions. These were the educators who were demoted as a part of the initial steps in school desegregation.

Black educators have not been and, apparently, cannot be winners while a public school system is in the process of desegregation. The only possibility that they can finally be winners will be if school systems will move into a mode of integration where there is positive social interaction, mutual cultural respect, and opportunity for job security and advancement based upon a true equality of status among all educators in the school system.

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